



Parent Handbook

*Awakening a child's sense of wonder,
fostering a child's love of learning,
and growing our relationship with God.*



Welcome to the Little Falcon Learning Center!

Your child is about to embark on a wonderful journey of learning, growing, and experiencing the amazing world God has given to us.

This Parent Handbook will provide you with information about the daily operation of our program, curriculum, early childhood education philosophy, and goals, as well as other pertinent contact and reference information. Please read through the handbook thoroughly. Also, retain this Parent Handbook for your personal use throughout the school year.

If after reading this handbook you have additional questions or need further clarification, please feel free to talk to your child's teacher or me at any time.

I look forward to an exciting and fun-filled school year!

Ali Harris
Vice Principal, Saint Rita School
Director, Little Falcon Learning Center
aharris@stritaschool.com
440-248-1350, ext. 271

Philosophy and Goals

This is an exciting time for your family. The Little Falcon Learning Center (LFLC) will be a valuable resource to you during your child's important, formative years.

The Little Falcon Learning Center is committed to each child's well-being and provides healthy, emotional models for them as they grow in self-confidence, independence, and in the ability to give and receive love. Children thrive best in an atmosphere of trust, respect, and love. Our educators provide a caring environment and allow the children to develop their own unique personality and abilities.

Our developmentally appropriate and intellectually stimulating programs support the imagination and promote a child's natural love of learning. Our educators encourage each child to develop the social skills necessary for positive relationships with others. Open communication between parents and staff is essential to fully meet your child's needs. We look forward to establishing a positive relationship with each family!

The Little Falcon Learning Center provides the foundation for your child's future success as they progress into Kindergarten and beyond.

Parental Responsibility

As the primary educator of your child/children, you have chosen to send your children to the Little Falcon Learning Center at Saint Rita School because you want them to be educated in a Catholic, Christian environment. This environment is to be a continuation of the Christian upbringing the children have received and are continuing to receive at home. Having chosen the Little Falcon Learning Center, it is vital that you support the educational efforts of the administration and teachers by your cooperation and involvement in the established policies.

It is our expectation that parents:

- Show courtesy and respect for administration, teachers and students.
- Pay tuition bills and fees in a timely manner.
- Follow the rules of the school and the provisions of this Parent Handbook.
- Attend special and regular teacher conferences.
- Respect the instructional time in the classroom.

Tuition and Finances

A \$150 registration fee per child is required, payable at the completion of your online application/enrollment packet. The fee is non-refundable. Included in the enrollment packet are different payment options. See the choices below.

1) full payment due in August **2)** 2 payments due August & December **3)** 9 monthly payments to begin on August 20 or September 5 and end either on April 20 or May 5 (\$50 fee for monthly payment plan). Your tuition payments will be withdrawn from your FACTS online Family Portal account.

Fees charged for your child/children's use of our Before Care/After Care/Falcon Friday/Lunch Brunch programs will be invoiced and withdrawn from your Facts online Family Portal account. The billing for these programs will be accessed up to several weeks after the date your child attended.

Admission Policies

The Little Falcon Learning Center will accept students of any race, color, or ethnic origin, with priority given to active registered members of Saint Rita Parish, followed by the members of a supporting parish, which include Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ss Cosmas & Damian, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and Church of the Resurrection. Priority will be given to brothers and sisters of students who are already enrolled in the Little Falcon Learning Center or Saint Rita School.

Discharge Policy

The Preschool reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition..
- Not observing the rules of the preschool outlined in the Parent Handbook • Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.
- Unsafe behavior of a child.

Elastic Clause

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems that arise, this clause empowers the faculty and administration to take disciplinary action for any behavior that violates the spirit, mission, and philosophy of the Little Falcon Learning Center even though not specified under conduct and discipline. The guiding principle is to insure a safe, nurturing environment conducive to learning. The definition of what constitutes serious behavior is determined by the administration with assistance from the Diocesan guidelines. The order in which steps are taken in following the school's disciplinary actions are determined by the administration or by a faculty member, as deemed necessary for the circumstance at hand.

Registration

Application is made through our online Facts Tuition Management Company. You will be directed to fill out an online application packet and pay your \$175 non-refundable registration fee to guarantee your child a spot in our preschool program.

By the first day of school, the following paperwork is required: (1) Child Medical Statement (2) Current Immunization Record (3) Copy of Birth Certificate (4) Baptismal Certificate (if Catholic).

Admission and re-admission to the Little Falcon Learning Center at Saint Rita School is on an annual basis. Re-admission is at the discretion of the school administration. A waiting list is established once maximum class size is reached as determined by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

Three Year Old Preschool Students: Children entering our three-year-old program must be 3 years of age by September 30.

Pre-K Students: Children entering our Pre-K program must be 4 or 5 years of age by September 30.

Parent Orientation

The Little Falcon Learning Center will host an orientation for parents of incoming students prior to the start of the year. You will be notified by mail/email as to the time and date.

Curriculum

Our Curriculum is aligned to the Preschool Curriculum and Academic Guidelines from the Office of Catechetical Formation of the Diocese of Cleveland and Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards. Our curriculum helps us build a community of learners by addressing the five essential domains.

- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Well-being and Motor Development
- Approaches Towards Learning
- Language and Literacy Development
- Cognition and General Knowledge

Learning opportunities are planned to allow children to make discoveries at their own pace, and to express their own creativity. Our educators do not expect projects to look the same, or for a child to do something in exactly the same way as another child. We provide an environment which values the process over the product.

Our Early Learning Curriculum includes:

- Language & Literacy Development
- Pre-Math
- Science
- Art and Expression
- Music and Movement
- Spanish
- Social Studies
- Physical Well Being & Motor Development
- Religion
- Social & Emotional Development

Before School Childcare

The Little Falcon Learning Center provides Before School Childcare for all preschool students Monday-Friday, 7:00am- 8:00am in the Little Falcon Learning Center classrooms, which are located in our Primary Building. At 7:45am, your child will be escorted to the appropriate classroom prior to the first bell. Registration is preferred, but not required. We welcome last minute drop-ins since we understand parent schedules can quickly change. A registration form can be obtained from the Little Falcon Learning Center Director or by visiting www.stritaschool.com and clicking on the Resource tab. To gain entrance to the School at 7:00am, please use the buzzer to the right of the entrance door.

After School Childcare

The Little Falcon Learning Center provides After School Childcare for all preschool students Monday-Friday, 2:45pm-6:00pm. Parents must register their child/children for After School Childcare. A registration form can be obtained from the Little Falcon Learning Center Director or by visiting www.stritaschool.com and clicking on the Resource tab. Registered students will remain in the Little Falcon Learning Center during After School Childcare hours. We provide a safe, enriching environment for students with plenty of fun activities. Snacks are provided. Pick up is at 6:00pm promptly. A \$1 fee for every minute late will be billed.

Child Custody

In the case of divorce or separation, a certified copy of the entire and most current court order stating who has custody of the child and other issues that relate to custody is to be sent to the Little Falcon Learning Center Director. The court order shall contain the signature of the judge and clerk of the court filing stamp. This information should be kept current. **If custody or arrangements that affect the child should change, a new copy must be provided to the Director. The Little Falcon Learning Center is not the place to exchange custody or begin visitation.**

A child is released only to the custodial parent, persons designated by the Emergency Medical Authorization form, or per specific written request signed by the custodial parent. Non-residential parents have the same right of access to the child's records as the residential parent unless specified limits are indicated in the legal custody agreement.

Information about the child and scheduled teacher conferences is communicated to the residential custodial parent who shares it with the other parent according to their court agreement.

Parent Request for Administration of Medication by School

Forms may be found in your online enrollment packet or you may request a copy from our school nurse. No medication will be given without the proper forms filled out and signed by parents/guardians, and your child's physician indicating dosage and other pertinent information. The nurse completes a medication log including dosage, date, and time.

If your child is highly allergic or has a severe medical condition, please call the Little Falcon Learning Center Director prior to the first day of classes to set up a time to discuss with the Little Falcon Learning Center Director and your child's teacher.

Morning class begins promptly at 8:15am. Drop off is between 8:00am – 8:15am. Please enter the primary parking lot from Parkway Drive. Students will exit the vehicle near the side doors closest to Linden Drive. Parents should help their child out of the car. If you feel you need more time for your child to exit the vehicle, please park in the spots shown in color on the map below. Staff will be in the parking lot to guide your child into the building and classroom.



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Absence Policy

If your child will be absent from school, please call the school office at (440-248-1350, ext. 106).

Dress Code

While there is no official dress uniform we offer these helpful suggestions:

- Play clothes are the most practical and comfortable for the child.
- Jogging suits are terrific for bathroom breaks.
- Art shirts are provided and help prevent some messes, but clothes may still get dirty.
- Party or dress shoes with leather soles should be avoided. Sneakers are ideal.
- We will gladly help your child with boots, hats, mittens, and scarves during the winter months.
- Please label all items of clothing: coats, boots, mittens, hats, book bags, etc.
- We encourage the children to dress themselves and to practice this important skill at home.

Bathroom Policy

The Little Falcon Learning Center is a preschool program for children ages 3 to 6 years old. All children attending Little Falcon Learning Center need to be bathroom trained. More than 3 accidents may result in him/her being excused from the preschool until bathroom training is complete.

Guidance

Our goal for children is that they develop inner control over their own behavior, as appropriate for their developmental level. Children learn self-control when adults treat them with dignity and use of guidance techniques such as:

- Guiding children by setting clear consistent limits for classroom behavior or helping them to set their own limits.
- Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity.
- Listening when children to talk about their feelings and frustrations.
- Helping children to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help them solve their own problems.
- Patiently reminding children of the classroom.
- Visual reminders.

It is our belief that children may need many opportunities to try different behaviors in the same way they need to try other skills, such as cutting with scissors. In order to help a child achieve the goal of inner control, our teachers utilize a **preventative discipline approach**. This includes the use of strategies to help prevent inappropriate behaviors. Activities are set up to give children choices, which include reasoning and redirection.

Giving choices and establishing consequences are effective ways of discipline. If choices, reasoning, and consequences are not effective, the teacher in some situations may decide to have the child sit in a thinking chair. This method involves the child sitting in a chair to think about what happened and giving the child an opportunity to calm down. After a few minutes, the child may join the group again. At no time will any child be subjected to verbal abuse, harsh, cruel treatment, or physical punishment.

Discipline

The first month of school is considered a trial period. On occasion, a program is not an optimal fit for a child or family. The Little Falcon Learning Center will make every effort to work with parents of children having difficulties; however, the preschool must also serve and protect all children. Children displaying unsafe behavior that has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional well-being of others or his/herself may be suspended from the preschool. The Director may immediately suspend a child at any time he/she exhibits a behavior which is harmful or unsafe to him/herself or others. A parent may be called from work at any time the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the preschool staff. A parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. Suspensions from the Little Falcon Learning Center may vary from a few hours to an indefinite period of time.

A preschool staff member in charge of a child or group of children shall be responsible for their discipline. Our preschool methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows: **1)** no discipline shall be delegated to any other child **2)** no physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control **3)** no child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a similar cubicle **4)** discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toilet accidents **5)** techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child **6)** discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use, and food shall not be used as a reward for behavior **7)** separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well ventilated space **8)** our preschool shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in our preschool program

Birthday Celebrations

A student may bring a **non-edible** treat on the day of his/her birthday celebration. Non-edible treats with a \$1 limit per item (pencils, pens, stickers, etc.) allow all the children to take part in the treat. Please keep it simple.

Lunches

Parents are responsible to pack a lunch and drink. We offer hot lunch options on Wednesdays and Fridays. Chick-Fil-A can be ordered on Tuesday morning with delivery on Wednesday. Pizza can be ordered on Thursday morning with delivery on Friday. Payment for orders will be deducted from your online account. Please let your child's teacher know if you choose to purchase these items for their lunch.

Snacks & Lunches

All snacks and lunches will be provided by the parent/guardian. Always clearly mark each child's snack/lunch bag with his/her name.

A choice from two of the groups listed should be packed for snacks: **a)** meat/meat- equivalent **b)** bread/bread-alternative **c)** milk group **d)** fruit/vegetable group

Ideas for snacks for parents to pack: apples slices with sunflower butter, fruit cups (mandarin oranges, pineapple, or pears packed in juice), sliced veggies (carrot sticks, cucumbers, and peppers), whole grain crackers and cheese, Edamame, whole wheat pita triangles with hummus, cottage cheese with cut fruit, fresh baked whole-grain mini muffins.

Field Trips

Classes will participate in field trips throughout the school year, which enrich classroom learning. In the cost of field trips, minimal charges are made to cover entrance fees. Children may participate in field trips only with complete written permission of a parent/guardian provided to the child's teacher prior to the field trips. Field trip permission forms will be sent home for completion in advance of the trip. Permission cannot be given over the phone.

Field trips are a privilege, not a right. Rules of the school regarding behavior apply to all field trips. Students may be excluded from field trips by the administration if their participation would be determined as detrimental to the group. This may be decided at any time including the day and up to the time of departure.

Parents attending field trips must meet all Parish & Diocesan screening requirements. **All parent volunteers are required to complete a VIRTUS Training Seminar and have their fingerprint reports done.** Dates and times of available VIRTUS training sessions as well as registration information can be found at www.virtus.org.

Volunteer Screening Process

Virtus Training - To maintain the highest level of safety for our children and our volunteers, Saint Rita Parish is continuing to adopt a screening process for all employees and volunteers who have access to our students.

"Virtus" is a Latin word that means, **"valor or moral excellence."** The Virtus Program assists our Church in being a safe haven for children and a messenger for preventing child sexual abuse within the Church and society in general.

If you wish to volunteer in our school - chaperone field trips, volunteer for lunch monitor, help during classroom holiday parties, coach a CYO team, volunteer in the library, etc., the following items must be completed in our volunteer screening process: Our screening process includes four areas:

- A signed acknowledgment form must be on file with the parish office that you have read a copy the **"Policy for the Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse"** written by the Diocese of Cleveland.
- A signed acknowledgment form must be on file with the parish office that you have read, and will comply with the **"Standards of Conduct for Ministry"** written by the Diocese of Cleveland.
- Virtus Training – Virtus is a three hour training course that must be completed. There is no cost to you. Visit www.virtus.org to register. Click on "registration" then "view a list of sessions". Select "Cleveland Diocese" to find a session to attend. Upon completion of the session, send a copy of your certificate to the parish office to verify your attendance.
- To complete your volunteer requirements, in your Virtus account click TOOLBOX on the top bar, then choose background check on the sidebar, and fill in the information. The process takes about 10 minutes and is easy to follow. There is a onetime \$25 fee to register with Selection.com. Please print your receipt and submit it to Saint Rita's and you will be reimbursed.

If you are new to Saint Rita School, and are already VIRTUS trained, please provide a copy of your certification to our School office. You will still need to perform a Criminal Background Check in the TOOLBOX section of your Virtus account.

Please note: Processing time for fingerprints varies from a few days to in rare cases, a few weeks. To ensure you are approved in time for the event for which you would like to volunteer, please plan ahead and complete the process weeks in advance. Once you have received your VIRTUS certificate, you must bring that with you to the Main Office to be processed.

Conferences and Progress Reports

Parent/Teacher conferences will be scheduled for all parents twice per school year. If a conference is desired at any other time, parents are to contact the child's teacher through a written note or email. Teachers can then assign a time and notify parents with the specifics of the conference.

Additional Communications

Little Falcon Learning Center communications, calendars, newsletters, and flyers are emailed to parents.

Safety Policy

No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised. Children will be greeted by the teacher or teacher's Aide and released to a parent/guardian at the end of class.

Fire and tornado drills will be practiced. Discuss with your child the importance of fire and tornado drills to help alleviate any anxieties.

School doors are kept locked. Visitors must go to the main doors in the Primary School building to enter and announce themselves to the office staff. This is a state law. If a visitor is expecting to go to a classroom, they must secure a visitor or volunteer badge from the Primary School Secretary.

If a child or parent exhibits unsafe behavior, the Little Falcon Learning Center reserves the right to suspend the child from the preschool.

Early Sign Out

A parent/guardian must sign children out before leaving the building. Parents are to park in the Primary School parking lot and report to the office.

Playground/Recess

Play equipment is provided for recess. Students must follow the directions of their teacher. Toys should not be brought from home. The Little Falcon Learning Center is not responsible for any toy or games brought to class.

Personal Property/Clothing

Please make sure all items/clothing are clearly labeled with the student's full name. In the event of loss or theft, the Little Falcon Learning Center is not responsible for financial reimbursement of personal property.

Parent Roster

Information in our online Family Portal under Family Directory.

Inclement Weather

The Little Falcon Learning Center follows the Solon and Twinsburg School Districts for school closings due to inclement weather. If either school district is closed, Saint Rita School is closed.

Saint Rita School utilizes an automated phone call and email service through our Facts Management Company that will notify families of all school closings. You will be given an opportunity to opt-out of this automated phone service if you choose not to participate. **There is no tuition reimbursement for inclement weather or calamity days.**

Management of Communicable Diseases

In order to minimize transmission of communicable disease, the following policies have been developed by the state as a way to protect the health of all children enrolled. A Communicable Disease Chart, which are the guidelines set up by the Department of Health, is posted in the Nurse's office. These guidelines allow minimal interpretation by staff. If your child shows symptoms listed in the guidelines, staff will contact you to take your child home.

A child with signs or symptoms listed below shall be isolated under the supervision of a staff member and then discharged to the parent, guardian, or other adult designated as an emergency contact: • A temperature of 99 degrees Fahrenheit by auxiliary (under the arm) method • Vomiting (one time)/nausea

- Diarrhea
- Undiagnosed/untreated skin rash
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Stiff neck
- Unusually dark urine and or gray or white stool
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Conjunctivitis (pink-eye): Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent (pus) discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Sore throat
- Evidence of lice, ringworm, pinworm, or scabies infestation
- Severe coughing
- Excessive nasal discharge from the nose
- Is unable to take part in regularly scheduled activities

A child experiencing minor common cold symptoms will be allowed to stay at school provided he/she is not exhibiting any of the above symptoms.

A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be: **1)** cared for in a room or portion of a room not being used in the preschool or in the nurses office **2)** will be within sight and hearing of an adult at all times/no child will be left alone or unsupervised **3)** made comfortable and provided with a cot or bed in the nurses office **4)** all linens, blankets used will be laundered before being used by another child/cots or the bed will be disinfected with appropriate germicidal agent or if soiled with blood, feces, vomit, or other body fluids, first washed with soap and water then disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent **5)** observed carefully for worsening condition **6)** discharged to parent, guardian, or person designated by the parent or guardian as soon as practical.

If a communicable disease has been diagnosed in a child, the school nurse will determine if a letter or email will be sent to each family to inform the parents what their child was exposed to.

A child sent home from school with the above symptoms may not return until:

- The child has been seen by a physician, been diagnosed and treated.

- The child has been seen by the physician, who has determined that the child's illness is not contagious and verified so in writing for the school's records.
- The child is able to participate fully in the regularly scheduled activities, as defined in this handbook.
- The child is symptom free for 48 hours.

Please call the primary school at 440-248-1350 ext. 106 or email your child's teacher if your child is to be absent on a particular day. If you expect that he/she may be ill the entire week, do state that when you call. It is equally important that staff maintains good health and not bring illness in to the school; therefore, staff with the above-stated conditions are expected to take sick days. Little Falcon Learning Center staff is trained in first aid, CPR and communicable disease.

Head Lice Policy

The Little Falcon Learning Center has a No-Nit Policy. This means a child found to have head lice may not return to school until all nits (eggs) and bugs are completely removed from the student's hair. **Upon returning to school the student must be checked by the Clinic before returning to their classroom.** Parents need to be vigilant as well, especially during outbreaks.

Strep Throat Policy

A child may not return to school following a positive strep throat culture until they have completed a full 48 hours of medication and have been fever free for 48 hours.

Fever

If a child has a fever of 99 degrees or above, the student may not attend school and cannot return to school until the child is fever free for 48 hours.

Conjunctivitis (Pink-Eye)

A child must leave school and be seen by a doctor if they have a suspected case of conjunctivitis (pink eye). A child may not return to school until they have had a complete 24 hours of treatment and there is no discharge coming from the eyes.

Healthcheck Services for Children Younger than Age 21

Healthchek is Ohio's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Program. It is a service for babies, kids, and young adult younger than age 21 who are enrolled on Ohio Medicaid. The purpose of Healthchek is to discover and treat health problems early. If a potential health problem is found, further diagnosis and treatment are covered by Medicaid.

Healthchek covers 10 check-ups in the first two years of life and annual check-ups thereafter and offers a comprehensive physical examination. Please go to the following website for more information: <https://medicaid.ohio.gov/FOR-OHIOANS/Programs/Healthchek>

License

The Little Falcon Learning Center is licensed to operate by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The preschool's licensing records, inspection forms, and license are posted in the classroom. To contact the Ohio Department of Education directly, call 1-877-644-6338.

We are required by ODE to maintain the following child/staff ratios: 3-year olds: 1:12; 4 and 5-year olds 1:14. The Little Falcon Learning Center usually maintains lower staff to child ratios in order to meet the higher standard of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This is subject to change from year to year depending on the status of enrollment.

Kindergarten Screening

Kindergarten screening takes places each year in the classroom. Since your child is a student in the Little Falcon Learning Center, you will not need to make a separate appointment for screening purposes. Your child's teacher will keep you up to date on your child's progress throughout the school year.



EXHIBIT A

PARISH RESOLUTION AFFIRMING AND ADOPTING RACIALLY NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Whereas, it has been the practice and policy of Saint Rita Parish School to admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school; and

Whereas, it has been the practice and policy of Saint Rita Parish School to not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs; and

Whereas, Saint Rita Parish School wishes to reaffirm this policy and practice and to adopt through a formal resolution such policy; Now, therefore by it resolved:

Saint Rita Parish School reaffirms that it admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Signed on this 30 day of October, 2024.


Rev. Thomas J. Behrend
Pastor, Saint Rita Parish

**Little Falcon Learning Center at
Saint Rita School**

Ali Harris, Director
440-248.1350, ext. 271

Saint Rita Catholic School

Eric Sikora, President
Faith Kirtley, Principal
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